





*Immigrants in the Making*

# The Italians

By

SARAH G. POMEROY



C. M. Panunzio,

From C. T.

Oct 20

1914

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## *IMMIGRANTS IN THE MAKING*

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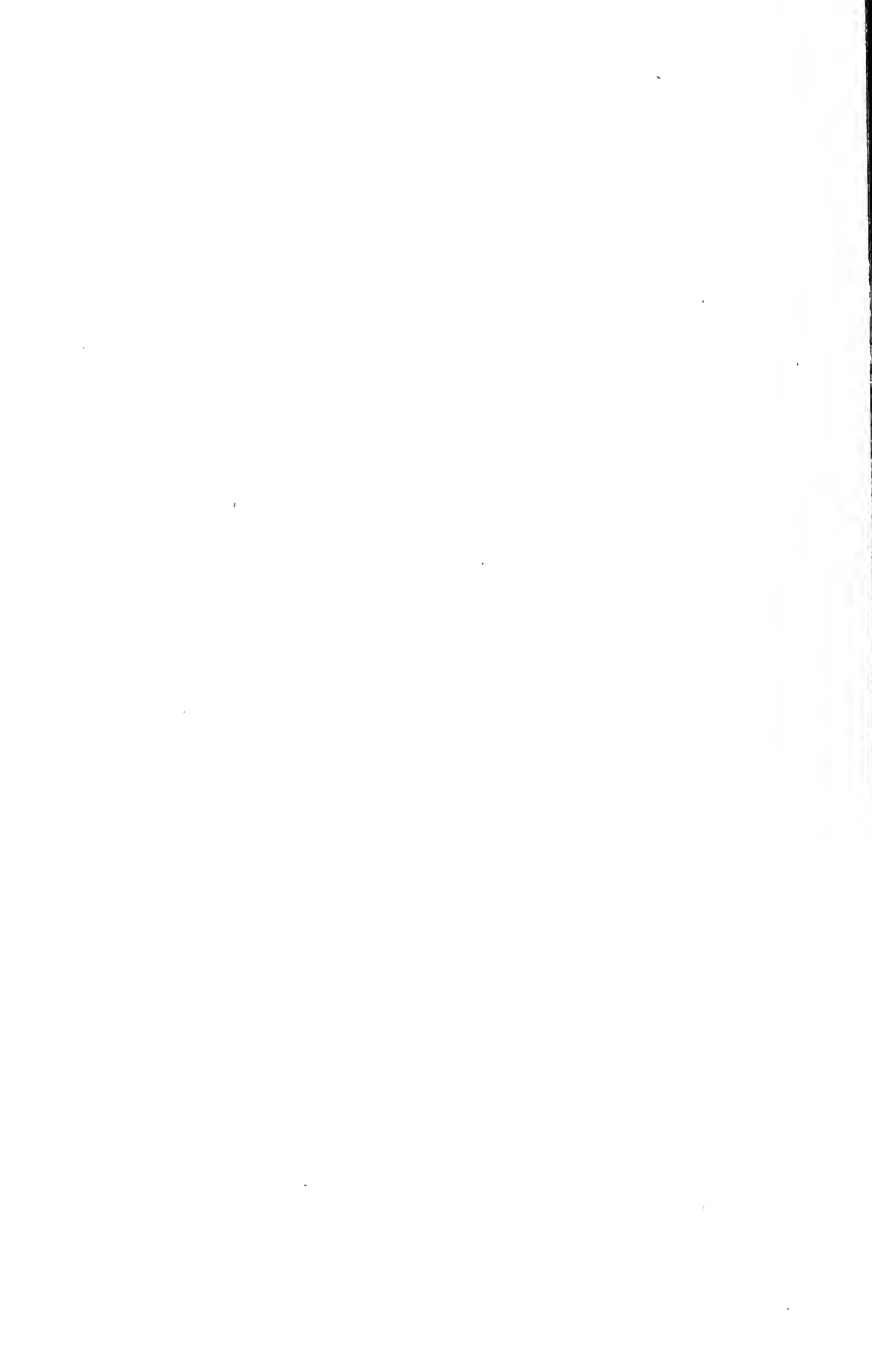
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LOOKING TOWARD THE PROMISED LAND.

*Immigrants in the Making*

# The Italians

*A Study of the Countrymen of Columbus,  
Dante, and Michael Angelo*

By

SARAH GERTRUDE POMEROY, A. M.

*ILLUSTRATED*



NEW YORK      CHICAGO      TORONTO

Fleming H. Revell Company

LONDON      AND      EDINBURGH

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FLEMING H. REVELL COMPANY

New York: 158 Fifth Avenue  
Chicago: 125 North Wabash Ave.  
Toronto: 25 Richmond Street, W.  
London: 21 Paternoster Square  
Edinburgh: 100 Princes Street

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# I

## THE ITALIANS AS A PROBLEM

**O**F all the vast army of aliens who daily pass through the portals of our United States, no one nationality deserves more attention and study than does the Italian. This is true first because of the numerical problem which it presents. The stream of Italian emigration has been turning towards the United States with a steadily-increasing current during the last twenty-five years. The percentage of Italian emigrants going to the United States out of the whole number leaving Italy for foreign lands has increased from 12% in 1888 to 44.4% in 1905. In 1906, the Italians arriving 286,314 strong, headed the list of immigrants for that year and the fact that 274,147 came in the year ending June 30, 1913, shows that they are still attracted to our shores.

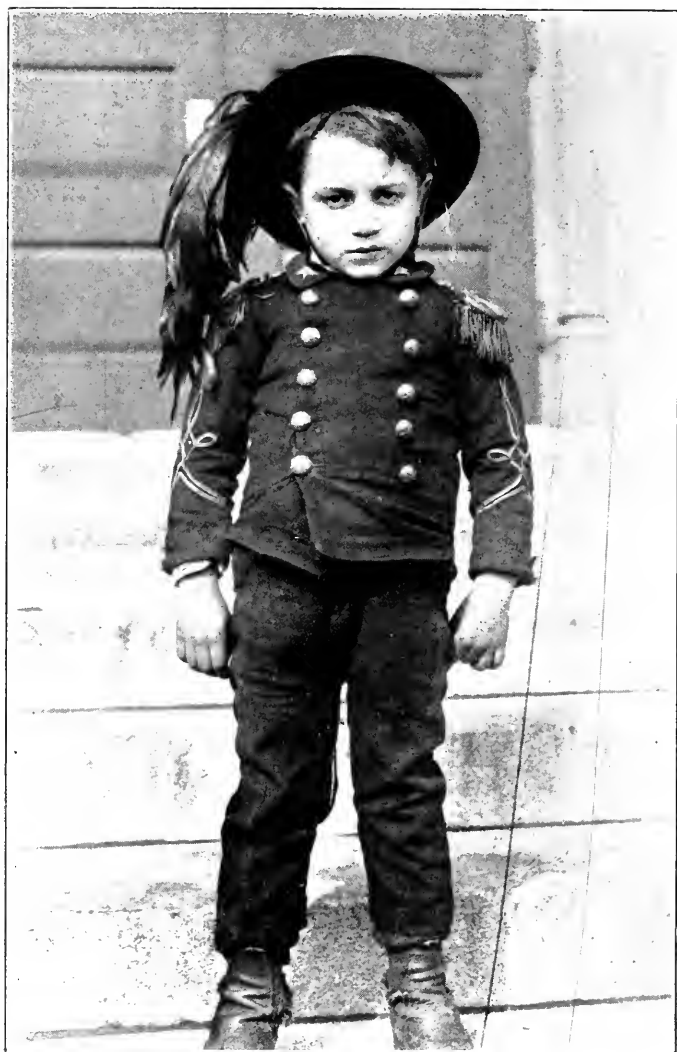
But the Italians deserve consideration not merely because they present a numerical problem, but because there has been a tendency to discriminate against them on account of the illiteracy and low standards of living displayed by a considerable por-

tion of the total number coming to our shores. And last, but not least, we owe them a debt of gratitude for giving us him who opened the pathway to the New World and made possible the development of our great nation. All the world is indebted to Italy but it has been truly said, "The New World owes to Italy the debt of the Old and more. There must be a strange lack of memory and of recognition of service when prejudice against Southern Latin origin would put up an irrational bar of entry in the face of the countrymen of Columbus."

But it cannot be denied that these people help to complicate our national problem. Bishop Brent, of the Protestant Episcopal Church, recently declared that "the United States is in far greater danger from the quality of immigration that comes from Southern Europe than from any peril that could come by Japanese ownership of lands in California, or from Asiatic immigration as controlled by our laws." In "On the Trail of the Immigrant," Professor Steiner says, "The most dangerous element which can come to us from any country is that which comes smarting under real or fancied wrongs committed by those who should have been its helpers and healers. Such an element Italy furnishes in a remarkably great degree, and I have







"Genoese boy of the level brow"

no hesitation in saying that it is our most dangerous element."

Why do the Italians come to America? The answer is long and complicated, but reduced to its lowest terms, it is twofold. First, like their great countryman, Columbus, they still seek the shortest passage to wealth; they set sail from the land of past grandeur to the land of promise, confident that on its shores they will find the wealth which has been described to them in stories quite as alluring and quite as fabulous as those which inspired the great explorer to seek the wealth of the Indies. Secondly, they come because there courses in their veins not only the blood of past generations of adventurers and explorers, but of artists, musicians, litterateurs, which impels them to seek for themselves opportunity not merely to maintain existence but to develop latent powers.

How do we receive them? Not always, but all too often, in the spirit voiced by Robert Haven Schauffler:

"Genoese boy of the level brow,  
Lad of the lustrous, dreamy eyes  
A-stare at Manhattan's pinnacles now  
In the first, sweet shock of a hushed surprise,  
Within your far-rapt seer's eyes  
I catch the glow of the wild surmise

That played on the Santa Maria's prow  
In that still, gray dawn,  
Four centuries gone,  
When a world from the wave began to rise.  
Oh, it's hard to foretell what high emprise  
Is the goal that gleams  
When Italy's dreams  
Spread wing and sweep into the skies.  
Cæsar dreamed him a world ruled well ;  
Dante dreamed heaven out of hell ;  
Angelo brought us there to dwell.  
And you, are you of a different birth ?  
You're only a 'dago,'—and 'scum o' the  
earth' !''

The history of past ages answers the two questions, "Why do they come?" and "What inheritance do they bring?" But it is to the history of modern Italy that we must turn for a more specific answer to the question, "What is their immediate inheritance?"

## II

### A BIT OF HISTORY

EVERY student can recall enough of the Roman history of his school-days to visualize the early history of Italy, the land which became a source of learning and inspiration second only to Greece, from which it obtained a goodly heritage. Italy became the centre of civilization and under its fostering care, Christianity took deep root. But it is not so easy for most of us to remember the story of the long centuries that lie between the downfall of the Roman Empire in 476, and the unification of modern Italy in 1870. It is a series of moving pictures, a kaleidoscopic panorama, a record of bloody wars.

From the downfall of the old Roman Empire until the coronation of Charlemagne (800 A. D.) whose genius for ruling tended to overcome separation, disorder and anarchy, Italy was ruled successively by the Visigoths, the Ostrogoths, and the Lombard kings and Byzantine exarchs. But the weak successors of Charlemagne were unable to carry out his policies, and the feudal system, fos-

tered by both nobles and clergy, developed rapidly until 962, when Otto the Great restored the Holy Roman Empire and established a dynasty that lasted until 1024. This emperor aimed to reduce the number and power of the vassal nobles, to diminish the papal power and to favor the growth of cities and towns. The maritime towns, in particular, Amalfi, Pisa, Genoa, and Venice, profited by this policy which prepared the way for the so-called Age of City Republics—but which also anticipated the long quarrel between the Guelphs and the Ghibellines.

All Italy became involved in this series of conflicts between the papacy and the empire. At last, the Peace of Constance (1183) confirmed the triumph of the free cities, and for nearly three hundred years they flourished to a greater or lesser degree, and influenced national history. The individual stories of these city republics are most fascinating and romantic but their rivalry was productive of inevitable discord that encouraged the rise of despots, who flourished from 1300 to 1500. This was a period of decadence, for the warring factions had deprived the people of all military spirit, and the country was not only at the mercy of domestic ambition but had become the battle-field of jealous foreigners. The many con-

quests and discoveries following the discovery of the New World and the East India passage had diverted commerce from its old channels and ended the brilliant history of Italian navigation. But Italy still maintained supremacy in letters, arts and sciences, and harassed though she was by political greed and rapine, she nevertheless fostered the Renaissance and (in the phrase of Hamilton Wright Mabie) "became the liberator and teacher of modern Europe."

In the midst of the general political corruption, the House of Savoy was the only one of the great families to maintain itself by enterprises of valor. The dukes of this House had for centuries ruled over the little domain of Savoy, the loftiest mountain region of Europe, containing the highest mountain peak, Mont Blanc; in 1559, by the peace of Catan-Cambresis, Piedmont was given to the reigning duke, Emanuel Filibert, whose bravery had won him fame. In the seventeenth century, the House of Savoy, through the brave deeds of four of its sons, arose with splendor above the general decay about it. Yet Italy as a whole continued in her decadent state throughout this century and the next, receiving her first impulse towards regeneration in 1792, under the influence of the French Revolution. Napoleon created new republics that

he merged into the new kingdoms he created for himself, or his favorites, so that Italy was still divided into several states of varying size, and still under the control of the foreigner ; but the revolution had inspired a new intellectual and moral movement that was destined to bring freedom.

Every social and moral evolution has its leaders who inevitably become popular idols. Italy had three, and the names of Garibaldi, Mazzini and Cavour still have power to bring a responsive gleam to the eyes of illiterate peasants. All three lived in the same period and were born within three years of each other (1807–1810). They have been called the knight-errant, the prophet and the statesman of Italian independence. Mazzini has been characterized as being “at once the William Lloyd Garrison and the Wendell Phillips of the Italian campaign” ; Garibaldi, “the Wellington of Italy,” and Cavour, “the Italian Bismarck.”

The year 1820 witnessed the first of the series of unsuccessful revolutions that eventually brought forth the New Italy. It centred about the House of Savoy, for since 1720, the Dukes of Savoy and Piedmont had ruled over the kingdom of Sardinia, which included Genoa and Sardinia besides Savoy and Piedmont. It was in 1821 that Victor Emmanuel, then King of Sardinia, was forced to abdi-





Garibaldi



cate after the reactionary measures he had attempted to introduce had caused the above-mentioned revolution. It was the sight of some of these unfortunate banished revolutionists, embarking for exile at the port of Genoa, which fired the boy Mazzini, then sixteen years old, to devote himself to the liberation of his country.

He felt that in order to have a free country, it was necessary to liberate its literature from classic and academic shackles and make it a political instrument. His first published essay was a treatise on Dante's love of country, for he had been reared on Dante and had made his doctrines his own. He established a liberal paper in his native city and then conceived the idea of the secret political society that he called Young Italy. He worked out the idea while lying in prison where he had been confined for his daring statements. The objects of the society were the liberty, unity and independence of Italy, and the only means to the end, as he conceived them, were education and insurrection.

Thenceforth, spies and informers were always on his track; condemned to the gallows by Charles Albert, King of Sardinia, because of his part in the unfortunate invasion of Savoy in 1834, and for uniting with Garibaldi in plotting the insurrection of Genoa, he was forced to flee from Italy. His

influence was felt in other European countries where parties similar to the Young Italian party arose, and from London, where he found refuge, he instigated many unsuccessful insurrections. But "the moderate Guelph school of politicians turned to their own advantage the agitation created in Italy by Mazzini and his followers," and thus the successful revolution of 1848, conducted by the very King of Sardinia who had earlier condemned him to the gallows, may be said to have been in a great measure the result of his activity. His character has been epitomized as that of a "prophet, a dreamer and a visionary who was so intensely democratic as to be really unfair to the autocratic landowners."

The elder line of the House of Savoy failed in 1831 and a new era dawned with the accession of Charles Albert, the first of the younger line. He immediately developed the material resources of his little kingdom and granted his people a free constitution, as soon as he had brought them to a state of prosperity. All Central Italy rose against the Austrian power, under his leadership, and although he was thoroughly defeated and peace was secured only after great pecuniary sacrifice, he struck the first real blow for Italy's freedom. But it was his son, Victor Emmanuel II, to whom he

resigned his crown on the night of his overwhelming defeat in battle, who became the real leader in the war for independence.

The young king, though distrusted and unpopular at first, gained the loyalty of his subjects by continuing the constitutional government established by his father in 1848, and by favoring a free press and considerable religious liberty. It was through this freedom of the press that Count Cavour, whose radical opinions in earlier years had displeased Charles Albert, first came into power. His growth in political influence was rapid and certain and he became premier in 1852. Nine years later, on March 17, 1861, Victor Emmanuel, King of Sardinia, assumed the title of King of Italy, for instead of acclaiming four foreign banners, the people now followed one flag. The boldness and determination of the king were supported by the statesmanship of Cavour, which was nothing short of marvellous amid the storm of internal commotion and foreign complication. His foreign policy was unique, intrepid and successful, and he played a daring political game that was crowned with good fortune.

The military success of the revolution will be forever associated with Garibaldi, who had become an exile after the unsuccessful insurrections of the Young Italians in 1833-1834. After years of ab-

sence, he returned to take part in the wars of 1849, but his unfortunate experiences then drove him into exile again. This time he sought the United States and became intensely interested in the anti-slavery movement and its leaders, and more and more impressed with the success of the nation that had resulted from the revolt of the colonists against England. He began to dream of a rebellion of peasants in Italy and after renewing his friendship with Mazzini and other revolutionists by letter, he returned to his native land and commenced quietly to carry out his plans.

“His ‘Call to Arms’ is one of the striking documents in military history. One morning a placard was found on the walls of Italian cities. It was Garibaldi’s ‘Call to Arms.’ What he offered men was rags to wear, crusts to eat, ditches for beds, no pay, forced marches, scant rations, and for medals sword gashes and bayonet thrusts and death—but with one accord the Italian peasants rushed to Garibaldi. Without military training, not a student of tactics, Garibaldi won victory after victory. Soon Sicily and South Italy were free and he moved on Naples. Then there was a coalition between the forces of Victor Emmanuel, the leader of the royalist army, and Garibaldi, the leader of the revolutionists. Kings are proverbially ungrateful,

and when Victor Emmanuel was safely seated on his throne, the Italian king sent Garibaldi, not to the head of his army but back to his peasant's farm. But if this act lessened the popularity of the king, it enhanced the fame of Garibaldi."

King Victor Emmanuel II lived but seven years to carry on the work of reorganization and unification, and when he died, universally mourned as "The Father of his Country," the task fell upon his son, Humbert I. This king had the love of his people from the beginning and his wife was particularly popular because she also was from the famous House of Savoy. Together they continued to win the love and loyalty of their subjects everywhere, for, fearless of contagion, they went into the midst of the cholera epidemic at Naples and, whenever possible, studied conditions of all kinds at first hand. During King Humbert's reign (in 1882) Italy entered into the triple alliance with Germany and Austria that assured friendly international relations and freedom to attend to domestic problems.

But the personal popularity of the monarch did not save him from the hand of an anarchist, by whom he perished in 1900. All Italy mourned for him and in even the smallest villages prayers were said for the repose of his soul. His son, Victor

Emmanuel III, who succeeded him, is personally as popular as his father and he and his dearly loved queen (Helena of Montenegro) are ever zealous for the welfare of their subjects, going to the stricken districts after the eruptions of Mt. Vesuvius and nursing the injured and comforting the dying after the earthquake at Messina. And yet even this beloved young monarch is in constant danger from assassination and has barely escaped death from the hands of an anarchist.



### III

#### UNITED ITALY

**A**LTHOUGH Italy was not really united, strictly speaking, until September 20, 1870, the Italians date the establishment of the modern nation from 1861 when the King of Sardinia formally assumed the title of King of Italy. Therefore Italy celebrated in 1911 the fiftieth anniversary of her liberty, and a brief review of what has been accomplished in the past half century is necessary for a thorough understanding of the generation of the present day.

The task of reorganizing, reconstructing and regenerating Italy has been stupendous. It has been complicated by the inherited suspicion and jealousies of ages, the lamentable ignorance of the great mass of the people, and the sensitiveness and reactionary attitude of the Roman Catholic Church. In the face of these facts the wonder is not that Italy is behind some more prosperous European nations to-day, but that she has risen to the position of respect that she now holds.

When the United States of America came into being, it was composed of a united people, industrious, intelligent, educated and ambitious. When United Italy shook itself free from the despotism of seven or more centuries of foreign rule, it was composed of a mass of disunited, discontented people, many of whom were absolutely illiterate and living in direst poverty. Jealousies between rival cities and states had been handed down as a legacy from one generation to another. The physical characteristics of the Italian peninsula had fostered disunion, for the Apennines, traversing Italy from the Adriatic to the Mediterranean, form a natural barrier between the north and south, and one which the northerners, for the most part, have shown little disposition to overcome. A French writer, in speaking of this, quotes the words of a rich Italian merchant of the north who said to him, "Napoleon had the right idea, a kingdom of upper Italy, a kingdom of lower Italy. They are two territories that cannot have the same institutions."

Recognizing this great fundamental barrier to union, the government attempted to overcome it by a cleverly devised military system which, although loaded with disadvantages, has succeeded in a measure in fusing the different national elements. "Military service is compulsory and in the same

regiment, in the same company, men of different provinces meet and live side by side for three years. Not only the soldiers of the active army but the reserves are grouped on the same principle. In case of mobilization, Sicilians would go to join their regiments in Lombardy, and Piedmontese in Calabria."

As a result sectional rivalries are no longer what they were. The interior frontiers of former times grow less conspicuous day by day. But the work is far from being finished. All authorities agree on this point. Says one: "If you question any one you meet as to his nationality, using only the most general terms that the language affords, he will say: 'I am a Piedmontese, a Venetian, a Calabrian, a Sicilian.' He will not say, 'I am an Italian.' In speaking of marriages, of commerce, or of politics, the inhabitants of some duchy or kingdom of former days will speak of a neighboring province without the fraternal feeling."

Education is the other great factor that has contributed to the unification of Italy, and the number of persons who are unable to read or write has gradually decreased. The census of 1871 gave 73% of illiterates, of 1881, 67% and of 1901, 56%—51.8% for males, 60.8% for females. The lowest percentage of illiteracy was in Northern Italy (in Piedmont)

where 17.7% of the population above six years were illiterate, while in Calabria (in Southern Italy) 78.7% of the people were illiterate, the percentage for the whole country being 45.5%.<sup>1</sup> The percentage of illiteracy has undoubtedly been decreased still further during the past decade, as the total number of elementary schools has been increased by about 8,000 in that period.

The educational laws require that there shall be an elementary school for boys and girls alike from six to seven years of age, upon which attendance is obligatory. Every commune of over 4,000 inhabitants is obliged to maintain a school of higher grade and to provide instruction for children up to twelve, who are obliged to attend it. In 1910, there were about 68,000 public and private schools, but many more are needed. In the poorer villages the classes are grouped in small, crowded buildings, the children who live more than a mile and a quarter from school need not attend it, and the teachers are very poorly paid. In recent years new schools for adult illiterates have been founded, which have filled a real need, and the government shows a disposition to improve educational conditions.

Poverty seems to be the chief cause of the illit-

<sup>1</sup> These are the latest available statistics, as given in the new edition of the *Encyclopedia Britannica*.

eracy, for the children are bright and learn quickly, and Italian teachers are not without initiative and educational ideals. The wonderful influence and popularity of Madame Montessori and her methods, which bid fair to usurp the authority of the German Froebel, is only one proof of this statement.

Poverty, too, has been responsible in large measure for the low standard of living and the large death rate which has prevailed in the past. But mortality is decreasing, and the present physique and morale of the troops show great improvement over the conditions of a few years ago. The poor physique of the nation as a whole has been attributed largely to the heavy manual labor undertaken by the women and children of the peasant classes, who form the mass of the population.

## IV

### ENEMIES OF PROGRESS

**P**OVERTY and sectional jealousy are easily seen to be the great opponents to advancement in Italy. Time and the development of moral responsibility on the part of the rich, industrious and better educated North towards the poor and illiterate South seems to be the only remedy for the second of the two evils. The first, poverty, is more complicated in origin and cannot be so easily remedied, even in theory.

Says René Bazini, author of "The Italian of To-Day," "This is an amazing problem, and one which confronts us almost everywhere in Italy. In passing from city to city, making no stop, asking no questions, you cannot help observing the contrast between the soil which gives or can give, everything in abundance, and the peasant, poverty stricken and unhealthy, as in Lombardy, or driven to emigrate as in Calabria. The villages along the route have not the clean and cheerful look of the French and Swiss; the impression of the picturesque—for the moment dominant—fades completely

and vanishes in the presence of pity for human misery. This world of poverty is a hard-working world. The people are not idle. Everywhere and at all times, the same testimony comes to me of patience and endurance in respect to this strong, unhappy race of men. To answer the question, 'Whence comes this extreme poverty?' we must take the provinces separately and examine local conditions, methods of agriculture, division of land, climate, hygiene and the profound differences of race and character to be found within the same nation." With these must be considered a series of catastrophes culminating in the terrible earthquake of Messina, in 1906, that have added to the impoverishment of the nation.

To undertake complete investigation of all these matters would be beyond the limits of these pages, but it is possible to speak briefly of two great underlying causes—excessive taxation and the maintenance of the feudal idea.

The primary cause of taxation is the fact that the nation is overburdened with debt and lacks natural resources. Money for education, for domestic improvement and development, must be obtained, and the only available method has seemed to be taxation. A large proportion of the national income has been used to support the standing army

which the nation, from its past experiences, has felt to be a necessity; the other large item of expenditure has been the interest on the national debt. As a result of this taxation, people have had to fight for a mere livelihood, and, as a northern Italian farmer of some wealth and unusual intelligence is quoted as saying, "What prosperity, what spirit of enterprise, what progress, is possible in a country where the soil is taxed 33% of its net income?" Says another, "The state, the provinces, the towns, do not tax but plunder the soil." It is universally acknowledged that no civilized nation has ever been so burdened with taxes. "Men were taxed for every bullock and goat that was slain, taxed for every bushel of wheat that was raised and for every liter of oil and wine. The landlord was taxed for each electric light, and on the basis of every servant that assisted his guests, until the weight of taxes crushed the people." Every traveller in Italy is familiar with the tax on railroad tickets.

Under these conditions it was natural that the poor and their leaders should raise the question of how the lands could be broken up and sold to the people, "how the tax burdens could be lifted from the shoulders of the poor, who were least fitted to carry them, and transferred to the rich landowners who were best fitted to carry them." This involves



a new adjustment of society and a series of far-reaching changes.

The greater part of the land in Italy is in the hands of a few titled people and of the Roman Church. In north and south alike, property and privilege belong to the few. It is impossible to make a general statement in regard to the landed aristocracy because their characteristics differ in different portions of the country. The following, written by Luigi Villari in "Italian Life in Town and Country," a decade ago, seems to be, in general, true to-day: "There are two separate types of aristocracy in Italy—the feudal or territorial, and the citizen or burgher aristocracy. The former exists in Piedmont, in the Argo Romano, in certain parts of Tuscany, all over the south, in Sicily and in Sardinia. The nobility of citizen origin is found in the towns of Lombardy, Venetia, and Central Italy." The Lombard nobility is described as being the most progressive and the richest of the Italian upper classes. "They are active and public-spirited and exercise some political influence." On the other hand, the nobles in Central Italy are "fairly shrewd and intelligent, but narrow-minded and conservative," taking little interest in politics. The landed aristocracy of Piedmont has lost its feudal character, and is assimilated with that of the rest

of Northern Italy, rather than with Southern Italy. In the past they had considerable political influence. They are good landlords and introduce improvements on their estates. The same is true of the Tuscan nobles, who treat their dependents with kindness and consideration. But the feudal aristocrats of the south are ignorant, lazy, overbearing and corrupt. They look upon their estates merely as sources of income, are absolutely callous to the condition of the peasantry and care nothing for improvements. There are some fine, public-spirited men among them but "as a class they show few signs of improvement, and differ little from their fathers in the old Bourbon days." In consequence of this attitude, the sanitary and domestic conditions of the mass of the people are deplorable.

The present situation in Italy is something like the economic situation in England, where the system of great landed estates has been a drawback to the rise of the lower classes for generations; but, in a way, they are not analogous, for in England the landlords are generally interested in the moral and physical welfare of those dependent upon them.

All this explains why socialism—not Christian socialism but the most radical type of the idea presented by that much-abused term—has taken such deep root in Italy. "The peasant who, in older

times, was not reached by the republican propaganda of the Mazzinians and had remained quite indifferent to his political rights, has in the last quarter century become more and more interested in that which Socialism preaches in the elementary form adapted to his mental condition which says, 'You have nothing, they have everything: take their place.'” Such doctrines have led to outbreaks of anarchy and the formation of pernicious secret societies. The situation is not entirely unlike the situation in France before the revolution. And yet, in spite of the popularity and the propagation of such theories, there still exists a strong feeling of personal loyalty between master and servant, a feeling which retains an almost feudal strength. While it remains, the educated, privileged classes might work reforms, if they would.

## V

### ITALY AND THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

**I**TALY has had its share of the social and economic unrest of recent years. The number of strikes has varied irregularly from 628, involving 110,832 workmen, in 1905, to 1021, involving 172,969, in 1910. The government has recently taken vigorous steps to suppress the Camorra, the most dreaded of all the great secret societies; and this is sure to bring good results. There is still another element, however, which complicates the social conditions, and that is the power and attitude of the Church of Rome.

In order to make clear the present attitude of the church, it is necessary to go back some centuries in the history of Italy and trace the part which the Roman Catholic Church has played. From the time of Constantine the Great, who is said to have endowed the episcopal see of Rome with large landed possessions, the Popes possessed temporal power over a large portion of Central Italy, and Charlemagne confirmed their right and donated

large possessions to them. "Under varying forms and with varying boundaries, the papal state existed through the Middle Ages as a spontaneous, legitimate growth, and its long possession through twelve centuries was no despicable element in the propagation of Christian faith and culture." It underwent various vicissitudes and its administration, particularly during the reign of Gregory XVI, caused great excitement among the population. Revolutions that broke out in 1831 and 1848 were only quelled by the aid of foreign soldiers, and they prepared the way for the victories of Victor Emmanuel and his army, who defeated the papal forces in 1860. Then only Rome and the patrimony of St. Peter's were left to the Pope and, ten years later, these, too, were incorporated into the kingdom of Italy. The government guaranteed the Pope the possession of the Vatican and Lateran palaces, and the continued enjoyment of the honors and immunities of a sovereign. But the Popes have never recognized the incorporation of the papal state, nor accepted the guarantees by which the government undertook to regulate its internal relations with the papacy. As an evidence of this, no pope since 1870 has stepped foot outside the Vatican domains, but has remained a voluntary prisoner rather than to appear to acknowledge in

any way the temporal power of the King of Italy. The influence of Cavour in the matter of the papacy was significant. His idea was "a free church in a free state." He believed in full freedom for the church in all spiritual affairs and for the state in all civil affairs and he opposed alike those who wanted to confiscate the estates of the church and those who hoped to make the state a mere tool in the hands of the church.

The Roman Catholic Church still has spiritual supremacy. According to the latest statistics 97.12% of the people are nominal Roman Catholics.

"But in spite of the churches and cathedrals, Italy, more than almost any other country in the world, may be said to be the land of no religion." The people, especially the men, have broken away from the ancient church and few have found anchorage elsewhere. The women in greater numbers cling to it with devotion, but as many educated Italian women testify, and as at least one writer declares boldly, it is rapidly losing its hold upon the women also, because of the disposition of the priesthood to take advantage of their sex.

The spirituality and rarely beautiful personal character of the present Pope is well known, and there are many pure, noble and self-sacrificing men connected with the administration of the church,

but the majority of the priesthood in Italy is degenerate. In many cases, younger sons of impoverished fathers have adopted the church as a profession solely for pecuniary reasons, and men of lower classes have used it as a stepping-stone to raise their level. Undoubtedly a certain percentage of them would leave it could they find other means of gaining their livelihood. There are frequent instances of priests coming in disguise to Protestant missionaries by night, declaring their belief in the aims of Protestantism and sympathy with it, and seeking guidance in regard to their course if they should leave the church. The financial exactions of the church from the poverty-stricken and tax-burdened people in order to keep up the splendor of the empty churches are excessive, and this, added to the fact that the superstitions and ceremonials of the services have long ceased to appeal to the reason of the better educated men, accounts for the large increase of atheism. So far back as fifty years ago, Mazzini, visionary and dreamer though he was, saw this danger, and during the last period of his revolutionary labors, his desire to separate republicanism from socialism and atheism was significant. He was neither Catholic nor Christian, but took for the motto of his banner, "God and the People."

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If the great Roman Catholic Church, so wonderfully organized and firmly established, could get the broader vision, and reform her methods, much good might be accomplished for the kingdom of Italy. Instead of that, she seems to take keen delight in blocking the national government in all attempts at progress, even at the expense of the temporal welfare of her own communicants. An illustration of this attitude is furnished by the methods which she employed to ruin the financial success of the World's Fair of 1911, when all Italy had prepared for an unusually large tourist invasion. Early in the summer, mysterious stories began to be circulated over Europe and in England and America about the dreadful epidemic of cholera which was sweeping over Italy. Tourists by the thousands cancelled steamship passages and turned back from the Alpine passes. Throughout Switzerland, wherever one travelled, he met frightened travellers who asserted that he took his life in his hands if he entered the infected country. And yet the writer, who was not to be deprived of the fulfillment of the dream of a lifetime, found that the actual conditions were not dangerous, and that the cholera epidemic had not been much more serious than it is likely to be during any unusually hot summer. Everywhere the people were saying openly that by



embellishing and circulating this story through underhanded and crafty means, the church had ruined the celebration of an anniversary which revived all her ancient rancor. The situation served to emphasize, also, how much a large percentage of the population depends upon the income derived from tourists for, in many cases, people who were generally comparatively prosperous had been reduced to real need.

## VI

### EMIGRATION

**B**UT Italy realizes her own condition and in that fact lies her salvation. An overmastering economic movement has taken possession of the land. Everything that has to do with the land laws, capital, labor, taxation and currency is being analyzed and discussed. To-day, Italy is publishing more books on these subjects than any other nation. Meanwhile, hundreds of thousands of the people, driven to desperation by the condition of affairs which they despair of seeing bettered during their own lifetime, have emigrated in largely increasing numbers. But the nation is acting as well as considering, as recent developments indicate.

“What class of Italians emigrate?” “Where do they go by preference?” “What contributions do they carry with them and what elements of strength or weakness are they likely to incorporate in the adopting nation?” These are pertinent questions which should interest us as citizens of the

country to which so large a percentage of them come annually.

Mr. William Dean Howells, writing in the closing years of our own Civil War, remarked that it was very difficult to tempt from home any of the home-keeping Italian race. That was before the great tide of emigration which had become especially noticeable in 1888 had commenced. The earlier emigrants to lands beyond the seas went preferably to South America, where the climate and the social environment promised to be homelike. Sufficient time has elapsed to make the effect of their presence in that portion of the New World very evident. It is estimated that over three million native-born Italians now reside in Brazil, Uruguay and the Argentine Republic. About three-fifths of the 5,562,730 Italians who were living outside of Italy in 1910 were in South America. The majority of them left their native land practically penniless, and they now represent the leading element in the population of the countries in which they settled. "They are not merely navvies or agricultural laborers; the richest merchants, the biggest contractors and stock-brokers, the most successful barristers, doctors, engineers and other professional men are Italians." This record of emigration would seem to prove the statement made by Emil Reich in

"The Future of the Latin Race,"<sup>1</sup> who says, "There can be little doubt that they are the most gifted nation in Europe. What characterizes them above all is their initiative. It is the first step which is hardest to take, but the Italians have been ready to take it."

A dispute between the Argentine Republic and Italy in 1911 resulted in the temporary suspension of emigration to that country. This injured the trade and agriculture of the republic but enhanced Italian prestige and the condition of Italian citizens throughout South America. Negotiations which were signed in 1912 insured peace. Among the anticipated good results of the opening of the Panama Canal and the consequent encouragement of more intimate relations between North and South America, the closer union of the Italian citizens in the two continents is anticipated.

In recent years the tide of emigration has turned towards North rather than South America. This is largely due to the fact that Italian emigration is of two kinds, temporary and permanent; for the people are to-day, as they were when Howells wrote of them, fifty years ago, essentially a home-loving people, and a large percentage of them are willing to go into voluntary exile for a period in a country

<sup>1</sup> *The Contemporary Review*.

where labor is needed at high wages and where they can save enough to keep their families in comfort for a lifetime. According to the standards of comfort in Italy, comparatively few American dollars will suffice to place an Italian peasant in affluence for the rest of his life. A case in point is told by Mr. Brandenburg of a young Italian whom he met in the steerage returning to Italy after working hard for three years in America. Hardships and deprivations had made him a victim of the white scourge, and he could hope to live only long enough to behold his native land again, but he declared that it was worth while because the \$820 which he had saved would make his wife and family comparatively independent. All over Italy are villages where an indefinable something in the very atmosphere bespeaks the introduction of American ideals and standards, and, upon inquiry, you will find that a returned emigrant dwells among the villagers.

Originally the Italians went to near-by countries where labor was needed. Most of the continental railways and the great Alpine tunnels were made by their hands. The northern peasant still seeks employment in France and Switzerland, whence he can return easily to his home after making enough money to tide him over a crisis. Those northern men who emigrate to lands beyond the seas, as a

rule take their families with them. This is not generally true of the southern emigrant; he is more likely to go alone, spend two or three years studying the situation and finding means for a livelihood, and then to return with money enough to bring out the wife and the children and the old people.

## VII

### THE EMIGRANTS

THE majority of northern Italians who come to the United States are from somewhere around the port of Genoa. But by far the larger proportion of the Italian emigrants who seek our shores come from the south of Italy, and since the characteristic differences are clearly defined, it is sufficient to confine an estimate of the personality of the Italian emigrant to the southern races. The percentage of emigration to the United States is highest in Calabria where, as has already been shown, the percentage of illiteracy is also the highest in the nation. But a large number come from the neighboring provinces, from those still farther south, and from Sicily.

Professor Drecke in his intimate study of the race says, "The southern Italian possesses great natural vivacity, impulsiveness, loquacity, humor, quick perception of the ludicrous. He is enduring and self-sacrificing when he is inspired, or urged on, but soon lets go his hold if other things direct

his interest or attention. He is amiable and complaisant but lacking in mutual confidence." The Sicilians are a mixed race; they possess external dignity and the sentiment of standing by one another rules their whole lives. Their conduct is generally good, but hatred and impulsive rancor are characteristic. There are such differences in dialect that a Neapolitan and a Sicilian can scarcely understand each other. The bitterest sectional feeling exists between the inhabitants of the various provinces and may be easily traced in the Italian quarter of any large American city. It is said to be particularly strong between the Calabrese and the Sicilian.

These people come from an agricultural country but many of them are also familiar with forms of home industry—for Italy, though not a manufacturing nation, has encouraged home industries to a great degree and the line between the artisan and the farm hand is not sharply drawn. The great proportion come in response to the demand for unskilled labor, for heavy out-of-door work, or manufacturing work of the crudest kind, which the American-born workman disdains. They mass in the cities on the seacoast because they are slow to venture alone in a strange community where they are ignorant of the language, and it is remarkable



how soon and how easily they change habits and modes of work and adapt themselves to different conditions. The peasant who seemed lazy and indolent in his home village generally becomes energetic and thrifty when removed from the enervating climate and from traditional strictures. All this was marked in the report of the Industrial Commission of 1901, which declared that the Italian peasants were learning the making of clothing very rapidly, that the elastic character of the Italian was similar to that of the Jew, and that the future clothing workers of this country were likely not to be Jews but Italians—a prophecy which the past twelve years has already partially fulfilled.

Say the authors of "The Italian in America," "There is a larger proportion of Italian skilled labor coming to our country than is popularly supposed, and more than is marked in the official returns of our Immigration Department. The Italian immigrant is now, perforce, content to perform unskilled labor for the time until he has gained a better foothold in the country, but his children born here will not engage in it, and educated workmen will not stoop to it. Among the Italian laborers on our streets and railways are some clerks and artisans and even professional men. Their ignorance of the language constrains them to

hard labor until they are able to make their services otherwise valuable to American employers. In such work they can be readily directed by Italian foremen and the average immigrant shrinks from exposing his ignorance to any but his own countrymen."

It is possible that still another factor in American life keeps these people in the unskilled class, and that is the fact that <sup>the American labor union</sup> trade-unions have such control that a skilled workman not possessing a membership card finds it almost impossible to get employment in his own trade. Several individual anecdotes of workers in our large cities tend to bear out this theory. An editorial in a leading Eastern newspaper declared, "Unlike the United States, Germany to some extent bars foreigners from the skilled trades that command a higher remuneration." Elmer Roberts, giving in *Scribner's Magazine* an account of the steps by which Germany is winning admirable industrial supremacy, tells how the police keep track of every foreigner who holds a workman's pass, and quickly discover if he is engaged at skilled labor—in which case, under the statutes of various states, the employer is obliged to discharge him. "Quite different is the case here," he adds, "where in spite of contract labor laws numerous German experts are brought

over for work requiring a grade of skill not easy to get in this country. In the case of Germany this attitude is natural and needs no defense." But it is hardly to be questioned in the case of the immigrant from Southern Europe whose competition is dreaded by longer established aliens, that such discrimination *is* being made, as a part of the race antagonism already evident among the foreign population of our cities.

It has recently been pointed out that "there is a positive economic waste in the transportation back and forth of the fluctuating wave of cheap labor, as between the Mediterranean and the United States."

The question naturally arises, "What impression of America do they take back with them?" So far as the Italians are concerned the question has been answered by Mr. Brandenburg, who speaks of the false atmosphere which the temporary immigrant creates for himself and his fellows, and from which he emerges only when he becomes Americanized. Those who come over merely to acquire a few hundred dollars feel that it does not make a great deal of difference what they wear or do, if they only get the money and get back. They do not rise above this state until they have been drawn into the real American life around them and have decided to remain here. Separated from

its opportunities for betterment, their state is inferior to that of those at home.

Eight of the nine members of the Congressional Immigration Commission advocated "the reading and writing test as the most feasible single method for restricting undesirable immigration." Those opposed to this test were declared by many people to be governed only by sentiment, and the spirit was expressed in the following jingle which was read in the House by Congressman Moore of Pennsylvania:

" We've dug your million ditches,  
We've built your endless roads,  
We've fetched your wood and water,  
And bent beneath your loads,  
We've done the lowly labor,  
Despised by your own breed—  
And now you won't admit us  
Because we cannot read.

" Your farms are half deserted ;  
Up goes the price of bread ;  
Your boasted education  
Turns men to clerks instead ;  
We bring our picks and shovels  
To meet your greatest need ;  
Don't shut the gates upon us  
Because we cannot read."

But there is more than a sentimental side to the question. One authority says, " If I had the choice






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ITALIAN GIRLS.

between admitting to the United States a wealthy, educated Roman nobleman and a poor Calabrese contract laborer unable to read and write, I should choose the laborer every time." He goes on to explain his stand by saying that a goodly proportion of the Italians of the better class emigrate to this country. "The lower class Italians in this country continue to pay respect and homage to those of their race who have been born to position, without regard to the changed and democratic conditions under which both gentleman and peasant are now living. It is safe to say that half the Italians from the better classes who come to America are far more undesirable than any of the lower class immigrants, except that class of habitual criminals who are doing so much to get their race despised by honest, clean-handed Americans. One of their worst influences is to retard the assimilation of their people by the great American body politic, by refusing themselves to be assimilated, even going so far as to send their children to private schools in order that they may not learn English, and insisting on wearing clothes of imported pattern and make. They are by birth, tradition and intent the leaders of Italian communities in this country, and their prejudices and examples confuse, if they do not entirely divert the natural social de-

velopment of their humbler countrymen all about them."

Those who cannot read or write are more easily moulded by American standards and are less apt to be affected by the newspapers—printed in Italian and reflecting anything but the true American spirit—which flourish in the Italian quarters of all our large cities. What impression the temporary dweller among us takes back to the folks at home can be ascertained in part by conversation with the villagers in any Italian hamlet. For the most part, they have a distorted, exaggerated view of the country, but one and all regard it as a wonderland, a land of promise where riches may be found in abundance. They gain this impression in part from the American tourists whose expenditures form the income of no inconsiderable number of the people, and, partly, from the stories of returned emigrants. Italians dearly love their children and the size of the population does not seem to have been materially affected by the great amount of emigration. According to the provisional returns of June, 1911, the population of the country increased 6.6% during the previous decade, and both Naples and Genoa show increased population.

The children soon learn the great lesson of Southern Italy that "He who eats must toil." A





story is told of an eight-year-old boy, the child of a temporary emigrant who had been in America two years, who pined to return, saying that he could make more money here after school selling papers than he could working all day in the fields in Italy where "he never had no time for no fun." Little lads like this furnish the incentive for the departure of many an older emigrant.

One writer, in summing up the characteristics shared in common by all Italians, includes, "A delight in music, as much in rhythm as in melody, the passion for play, including the game of chance called lotto, the liking for politics and public discussion, a great hardness of body and connected with it a liking, at least among the men, for passing their lives out-of-doors in the streets." Some of these characteristics are quite evident among the Italians in this country. "The traditional eminence of Italy in art is maintained in the choice of the late Italian Director of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York and by the proficiency of the Italian-American children in all primary schools of drawing and design. Already the Italians of New York have contributed three monuments to the city and the handiwork of naturalized Italians as well as of their children born in this country may be seen in the pictures, statuary and mural decora-

tions adorning many fine residences in America. The love of music is also universal and all Italians have correct ears, if not trained voices. In this connection an anecdote told by the author of "Four Months Afoot in Spain" is significant. In the steerage of a trans-Atlantic liner, he met a young Italian who was returning home after spending eighteen months in this country, during which time he had lived in the Bronx and had earned seven dollars a week kneading spaghetti dough. In speaking of his savings, he remarked confidentially, "I have spent only what I must—two dollars in the boarding-house, sometimes some clothes, and in the winter each week six *lire* to hear Caruso." The author remarks "Thirty dollars a month and the peerless-voiced a necessity of life! I, too, had been a frequent 'standee' at the Metropolitan, yet had as often charged myself with being an extravagant young rascal."

The Italians hate slavery and have an innate bent for politics. They appreciate American progressiveness and the necessity of American standards of education for the advancement of their children. It is a well known and amusing fact that some of them rechristen their children with Irish names in order that they may be "real Americans." This is only one illustration of the fact that

there is sympathy between the two races which is stronger than many people appreciate. It has been recognized by most social workers. The essential good nature of both, and the common religion, are bonds of union, and the Irishman often becomes the Italian's political guide.

"We ought all, once a year at least, mentally to live in the steerage," says Professor Steiner, and he has followed his own advice not once but many times. Among the discoveries thus made by him and by others who have done this for the sake of service is that many unfit and dangerous people are constantly slipping through the barriers, helped, possibly, by the Italian emigration laws that may thus clear the country of dangerous characters. It is also asserted that many of the hopeless tragedies of Ellis Island, where men and women are turned back at the very gateway of the New World impoverished and discouraged by their fruitless attempt to enter the land of promise, could be averted if the various tests were made in Italy, and the emigrant were aided intelligently, instead of being left the victim of sharpers and charlatans of all kinds. Although it is undoubtedly true that no nation of Europe has been more circumspect in its provisions for regulating and safeguarding its emigration and colonization, Italy seems to have

realized only recently that it is to her interest to have the Italians who go to the United States of such character as shall reflect credit upon the nation. Not until May, 1913, did the Italian government, acting upon the personal suggestion of King Victor Emmanuel, take steps to prevent criminals, and particularly anarchists, from emigrating to the United States. The Council of Emigration has decided to extend legal assistance to all Italian emigrants to America in order to ameliorate the difficulties which hitherto have beset them at the port of departure, as well as at the port of arrival.

## VIII

### HAND IN HAND

THE problems of Emigration and Immigration go hand in hand. The Old World is concerned primarily with the first, and the New World with the second, but neither can be solved independently. Intelligent and sympathetic coöperation is necessary. It looks as if the day of such coöperation between Italy and America had already dawned. An example of the new methods being employed to help in the solution of the mutual problem is seen in the appointment by the Italian government, two years ago, of Professor Racca, to study conditions in Southern Italy and the causes of emigration. A student of economics for over twenty years, and an assistant professor of political economy in the University of Rome for several years, Professor Racca came to this country highly recommended by the Italian minister of foreign affairs, to study the conditions and problems of immigration here. During his stay he was induced to give courses of lectures in New York and Boston, speaking to the Italian citizens of both

cities in their native language on the history, economics, geographical, political and social conditions of the United States, and the opportunities and dangers that Italians meet here. His audiences increased in size through each course and the effect of his lectures is said by social workers and others well qualified to judge to have been exceedingly important.

Recent developments in Italy prove that she is thoroughly awake to the interests of her people. Realizing the need of more industrial enterprises in the south, the government is promoting a scheme for the construction of three great artificial lakes in the Sila range of mountains, which will furnish one hundred and fifty thousand horse power for industrial purposes in Calabria and Apulia. In Sardinia a great reservoir is already under construction which will not only remove a menace to the public health by draining a malarious region of fifty thousand acres of marshes, but will provide power for electric lighting and traction for the Sardinian mines. Italy's chief resource, however, will always be agriculture, and she has taken the initiative in organizing and developing this great occupation along modern lines. The International Institute of Agriculture was established in Rome in 1905,

upon the personal suggestion of King Victor Emmanuel III, who provided it with land and buildings and contributed largely to its financial support in addition to giving it official approval.

Forty-nine other governments have joined Italy in this movement, representing ninety-five per cent. of the world's area, and ninety-eight per cent. of the world's population. It has already done work of incalculable value to the world as a whole "by securing international coöperation in world crop reports, in disseminating agricultural intelligence, in promoting coöperative agricultural finance, in fostering more economical distribution of the world's agricultural production, and in facilitating better understandings between the peoples of the earth."

Speaking to the members of the American Commission visiting Italy, in 1913, His Excellency, Hon. Luigi Luzzatti, spoke especially of the "popular banks," the independent banks, and the various systems of collective earnings, all of which, he declares, it is hoped will help to turn the tide of emigration without making necessary the passage of obnoxious prohibitive laws. If this same commission could formulate some plan whereby the Italian peasants who come to this country, ignorant of modern farming methods and machinery but mas-

ters of the art of irrigation, could be encouraged to settle in some of our arid regions, it is quite possible that the desert would soon be made to "blossom as the rose." This is only one way in which the Italian Immigrant could be made a genuine national asset.

The writer knows of one American woman who made it a point to speak a kindly word to the young Italian fruit-vendor who came daily to her door. The acquaintance developed into a lasting friendship, and the kindly American woman has stood as a mother to the young man alone in a strange land, and has his gratitude for helping him to start in the right path. Little acts of friendly interest like this are possible to many Americans, but how few perform them. After all, the Immigration problem is a problem of good citizenship, and so is a personal problem which each should help to solve.

No one who has ever crossed the Atlantic from Naples and watched the steerage passengers as they approach America can fail to be moved by the pathos of the hopes which shine in their expectant faces. More and more do we come to realize the aptness of that simile which has described America as "the Melting Pot" of the nations. Were ever words fuller of real prophecy than those



of Israel Zangwill—"The real American has not yet arrived. He is only in the crucible. He will be the fusion of the races, the coming superman. . . . Yes, East and West and North and South, the palm and the pine, the crescent and the cross—how the great Alchemist melts and fuses them with his purging flame! Here shall they all unite to build the Republic of Man and the Kingdom of God. What is the glory of Rome and Jerusalem where all nations and races come to worship and look back, compared with the glory of America, where all races and nations come to labor and look forward!"

No thoughtful citizen of the United States who studies the Italian immigrant sympathetically can deny that he possesses qualities which by the fusion of the races in the great melting-pot of modern history will enrich the endowment and inheritance of the coming American.

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